United Nations A/HRC/26/NGO/97

General Assembly

Distr.: General
6 June 2014

English only

Human Rights Council
Twenty-sixth session
Agenda item 3
Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

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The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[26 May 2014]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.14-04456 (E)
1404456

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Child Early Marriage and Divorce in the Islamic Republic of Iran

Iran is a signatory to the international convention on the right of the child and has ratified this convention in November 2001. Nevertheless, violence against children continues to exist in various areas. According to Article 1041 of the Civil Law, the age of marriage for girls is 13 and boys 15. However, if the child's guardian (father or grandfather) requests and the court conclude that she/he is adult enough to be married off, the child can be married even at an earlier age. Furthermore, in September 2013, a Bill on adoption of children under state care passed through the Iranian parliament and approved by the Guardian Council and consequently became law on 23 October 2013. Article 27 of the Bill sanctions the marriage of the adopted child to the man who is considered to be her father and raised by him.
The statistical figures presented by "vital information and statistics on the Islamic Republic of Iran" indicate the scope of violence of the rights of the child in this regard.

According to Article 1 of the International Convention on the Right of the Child which Iran has ratified, everyone under the age of 18 is considered as a minor and therefore is unable to make informed decisions. Marriage before the age of consent is one category in which the child has no or little perceptive of the nature and the consequences of the act. Although in some countries and in cases of extreme poverty or according to traditional practices and tribal customs, families force children into marriage before the age of consent, in most countries this is an unlawful act.

Unofficial reports on the marriage of minors in rural and tribal areas between tribes as a way to settle bloody disputes are also not included in this report. The "blood gift" is usually an under-aged girl who will be exchanged without official marriage documents and acknowledgement and therefore treated as slave thereafter[1].

In the province of Khuzestan, marriage of cousins is a norm. In such cases if the child declines such marriage, the cousin has the right to kill her. In some cases other male family members such as male siblings or the father do join in the honour killing. According to Article 301 of the Islamic Penal Code "If the father or grandfather murder their daughter they will not receive Ghesas (retribution) but the punishment will be: 1- paying the Dieh (compensation). 2- Exile from home by order of the judge. 3- Punishment (Ta'ziir) according to the judge's discretion. 4- Punishment of taking fast for 2 months (Kafareh).

Forced marriage of under-aged girls to Afghan men is another issue in Iran. According to Iss'a Mussavi Nasab, foreign affairs general director at the greater Tehran province in some rural areas young girls are sold to Afghan families in exchange of little money. Such marriages are not officially registered.

This report is based on the official statistics on the marriage and divorce of the under-aged children.
Early marriage and divorce of minors in Iran are best viewed according to official statistics. The total number of child marriages and divorce are far higher than figures below, as many cases are not officially registered.

- In all, a total of 317 girls children under 10 were married in 1386 (2007-2008), 302 in 1387 (2008-2009), 449 in 1388 (2009-2010), 716 in 1389 (2010-2011), 220 in 1390 (2011-2012) and 189 in 1391 (2012-2013).
- In all, a total of 1011 boys children under 15 were married in 1386 (2007-2008), 858 in 1387 (2008-2009), 1149 in 1388 (2009-2010), 1452 in 1389 (2010-2011), 742 in 1390 (2011-2012) and 358 in 1391 (2012-2013).
- Director General of Personal Status Registration Office in Tehran province reported 75 marriages of girls and boys under age of 10 in 1390 (2011-2012). The number of marriages of children between 10 to 14 years old was 3929 and 19,237 between 15-19 years old in the same year.
- In 2011, 12 cases of marriage of girls younger than 10 years of age with men of 35-39 years of age were registered. In the same year, 10 cases of boys under 15 with women of 30-34 were also registered. In these

[1] A/HRC/24/NGO/112 (Forced marriages to stop revenge)

statistics prior marriages had not been included. In all, in 2011, an estimated 40,571 marriages and 928 divorces of under-aged children had officially been registered.

Table provinces with the highest rate of child marriage & divorce			
Numbers in each province	Sex & age	Type	Year
Sistan & Baluchitan(79), Khuzestan (21), Kohkiloyeh & Boyer Ahmand (17)	Girls under 10	Marriage	2011
Khorasan Razavi (6759), Eastern Azarbaijan (3348), Sistan & Baluchistan(2355), Khuzistan(2150), Fars(2097)	Girls between 10-14		
Sistan & Baluchistan(156), Khorasan Razavi(59), Khuzistan(54), Western Azarbaijan(52)	Boys under 15		
Khorasan Razavi(160), Tehrnan(77), Eastern Azarbaijan(68), Hamadan(54)	Girls between 10-14	Divorce	
20 cases in all in Eastern & Western Azarbaijan, Ardebil, Nordern Khorasan, Khuzestan, Ghazvin, Fars, Sistan & Blauchitan, Ghom, Lorestan, Mazandaran, Tehran , Yazd, Bushehr and Hamadan	Boys under 14		
Sistan & Balucjistan(36), Khuzestan (35), Zanjan(15), Fars(12)	Girls under 10	Marriage	2012
Khorasan Razavi(7350), Eastern Azarbaijan(3920), Khuzistan(2243), Fars(1935), Hamadan(1972),Tehran(1752),Western Azarbaijan(1681), sistan& Balichistan(1664)	Girls 10-14		
Sistan & Baluchistan(55), Khuzistan(41), Western Azarbaijan(31)	Boys under 15		
Hamadan (1)	Girls under 10	Divorce	2012
Khorasan Razavi(150), Eastern Azarbaijan(119), Tehrnan(83), Mazandaran(62), Khuzistan(56), Fars(56), Hamadan(54), Tehran(1752)	Girls 10-14		
Kermanshah(5), Sistan & Baluchistan & Mazandaran(2), Eastern Azarbaijan, Tehran, Khorasan Razavi,Hamadan, Golestan and Kurdistan (1)	Boys under 15		

Child early marriage in poorer families and deprived areas can be compared to human trafficking and slavery. The family receives money in exchange for an under-aged child who can be abused both sexually and psychologically. Prevention of sin and unlawful sexual relations is another reason behind some cases of early child marriage.

Marriage of under-aged girls results in:

1- Deprivation from continuation of education and normal childhood. Article 53 of the education bill states conditions for married children as follows:
2- Participation in the final exams without participation in the classes
3- Attending adult evening classes
4- Registering at school but not attending classes
5- Attending classes but not allowed to speak of married life

Article 53 does not mention the gender of the married child but in effect married boys have no difficulty to continue their education as normal.[2]

Long-term consequences of early child marriage:

a) Irreversible psychological damages
b) Tear of the vagina and bleeding, infection and sexual diseases
c) Early pregnancy and its consequences to the body of the child
d) Deprivation of normal childhood and having adult responsibilities which brings about anxiety, fear, depression and domestic violence.

Recommendations:

- Changes in the Article 53 of the school rules, so that under-aged married children can continue their studies alongside their peers.
- Steps taken to prohibit child, early and forced marriage by cancellation of Article 1041 of the Civil Law and bringing the age of marriage to the international standards and conventions which Iran is a signatory.
- Implementation of strict rules on the registration of child marriages at the Notary offices and punishment for those who bend the rules and adopting measures and implementing strategies to eliminate the issue.
- Setting heavy punishment for parents who marry their children or sell them at an early age. Simultaneously seeking ways to get poor families out of poverty as a preventative method.
- Setting up courses and workshops for judges who work at family courts, on international convention on the right of the child.
- Setting up courses and workshops on international conventions on the right of child to all involved including those at the welfare state, teachers, and the notary offices, the civil society activists and other relevant stakeholders to promote the elimination of child early and forced marriage.
- Action taken to address the issue in communities involved and to address or mitigate its impact, making specific reference to the outcomes of such policies for the health of the nation especially children and women.
- Inclusion of sex education and family planning to the school curriculum.
- Cancellation of Article 27 from the bill on adoption.
- Regular research, assessment and study at national and sub-national level on the prevalence of child, early and forced marriage and/or its impact on the human rights of women and girls and other affected groups.

2 http://www.tabnak.ir/fa/pages/?cid=77082